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ENHANCING COMMUNITY ACCESS & UTILIZATION OF ZINC AND ORS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CHILDHOOD DIARRHEA IN AFGHANISTAN

JULY 2015 - JUNE 2020

\$15 MILLION

OVERVIEW

Diarrhea is the second leading cause of death among children under five worldwide. Most diarrhea-related deaths in children are due to dehydration from loss of large quantities of water and electrolytes from the body in liquid stools. Management of diarrhea either through oral rehydration salts (ORS) or a recommended home fluid can prevent many of these deaths. Since 2003, Afghanistan has treated childhood diarrhea using the Basic Package of Health service delivery model. However, the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey on the coverage of treatment for diarrhea with Zinc and ORS remains at 5 percent.

USAID, in collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan and UNICEF, designed this activity to increase equitable access to prevent and treat childhood diarrhea with ORS and Zinc. This improves the quality of prevention and treatment of diarrhea in existing health facilities as well as extends access to prevention and treatment of diarrhea with Oral Rehydration Salts and Zinc to children who are not currently reached by the Basic Package of Health Services. The activity contributes to the reduction in child mortality rate and stunting by improving management of diarrheal among children under five.

ACTIVITIES

- Build capacity of health workers, midwives, nurses, and doctors at primary health care levels for appropriate management of diarrheal diseases among the community.
- Improve the knowledge and care practices among the community and care-givers for improved prevention and management of diarrhea using Zinc and ORS.
- Increase community access to diarrhea management services (Zinc and ORS) through Community Health Workers (CHW's).

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Management of diarrhea with Zinc and ORS introduced as part of child health scorecard indicators. National, Provincial, and District level data analysis report completed and distributed.
- Procured and distributed one million Zinc and ORS co-packs for CHW's to effectively manage one million children with diarrhea.
- In February 2017, trained over 250 health care providers on appropriate skills and knowledge of diarrhea management for mothers and caregivers. Flash cards and story books depicting management of diarrhea with Zinc and ORS were developed, pretested, revised, and printed under the supervision of the MoPH health promotion department.
- Trained nearly 3,400 CHW's from ten provinces (about 13 percent of the planned trainee cohort for the life of the project)
- Revised training modules for management of diarrhea with Zinc and ORS to enable health care providers from basic health facilities to provide quality services for the management of diarrhea in children under five
- Oriented all zonal UNICEF staff with detailed activity training to include follow up plan and positioning for self-guide or extender monitoring guidance. Developed a Zinc and ORS co-branding communication strategy to align with the MoPH health promotion strategy.
- Held four zonal consultative workshops for the implementation of the Zinc and ORS project for over 120 provincial health officers from all the provinces. Each province developed an implementation plan, which included estimates of Zinc and ORS co-packs required per province. UNICEF coordinated with Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) on the distribution of ORS and Zinc co-pack and educational materials through the private sector.

Date: August 2017
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